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12.

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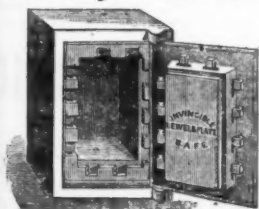
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"THE STORY OF OUR LIVES FROM YEAR TO YEAR"

# ALL THE YEAR ROUND

A Weekly Journal

CONDUCTED BY

CHARLES DICKENS

WITH WHICH IS INCORPORATED

"HOUSEHOLD WORDS"

No. 301. NEW SERIES.

SATURDAY, SEPTEMBER 5, 1874.

PRICE TWOPENCE.

## A NARROW ESCAPE.

BY THE AUTHOR OF "DENIS DONNE," "NO ALTERNATIVE,"  
&c. &c.

### CHAPTER XXV. "MY ONLY HOPE."

"WHAT a divided family we seem to be now," Mrs. Forest says rather sadly to her two daughters, as Marian brings her reading of a brief notice of one of Frank's new pieces to a conclusion. "We don't even know when Frank has a new play out, until we see a notice of the fact in the papers."

"He might have the civility to send us stalls for the first night," Gertrude grumbles; "probably he gave them to that dreadful Mrs. Grange. May would take care of that, though the Constable is not born yet who can appreciate Frank's comedies."

"I wish you would go and see your brother oftener than you do," Mrs. Forest says, with a little thrill in her voice. "My poor boy! he seems to be drifting away from his own people, and I am sure that it's not because he is so happy with his wife's family."

"It's easy enough to say 'go there oftener,'" Marian answers; "but it's an uncommonly difficult thing to do. Frank has the air of a man who is a visitor in his own house, and May is so full of the knowledge that the house, the furniture, and the money are all her own, that I hardly dare breathe in her atmosphere, for fear it may cost Frank something when we are gone."

"Bear the unpleasantness for your brother's sake," Mrs. Forest says, and there are actually tears in her eyes as she says it. Her pride is deeply hurt by the subordinate position her son has been compelled to take up in his own household. But her affection is more deeply wounded still, for her maternal instincts tell her

that her boy is not happy, and she feels with sorrow that in his unhappiness he does not turn to her.

"Kate lost to us altogether, and Frank estranged from us," she says plaintively; "do let us make an effort to avert this last misery," she goes on with energy, "go and see them to-day; take it for granted that they are both glad to see you, and treat May so cordially, that she will confide in you, if she fancies she has any cause of complaint against Frank."

"Defend me from having to listen to May's fancies," Gertrude says, shrugging her shoulders.

"And defend me from falling into such depths of mean-spiritedness as to allow a Constable under any circumstances to utter a word against Frank," Marian laughs. "Mamma, I believe you are only raising bogies. Frank is devoting all his time and attention to the magazine very properly."

"I never see it anywhere," Mrs. Forest says; "I hope he is making a good thing of it. If I could know that he was making a good income independent of May, I should be happier."

"He told me, when I saw him last, that he meant to make it a great success," Gertrude puts in, "he was going to engage the best authors and artists at fabulous prices."

"And who is to pay them?"

"The proprietors, I suppose. Now, mamma, don't worry yourself, and throw up your hands in despair; the pleasure of paying does not devolve upon the editor."

"He told me he was part proprietor, as well as editor," Mrs. Forest, says, anxiously, "I do distrust these new ventures so thoroughly, and if Frank loses money, May will make him feel that it's not his own that he is losing."

"Yes, May has lost every atom of that silly softness that took him a little at first," Marian says, as quietly as if falling out of love with his wife were an everyday occurrence in the life of a man.

"I never felt more low-spirited about his prospects than I do now," Mrs. Forest says, dejectedly; "he never tells me anything of his affairs, as he used to do—not that I ever bought his confidence when I was his only banker," the mother continues, proudly, "he gave it to me freely—but now, if I even venture to dip beneath the surface, he only says, 'Don't worry yourself, mother, I'm all right,' and I know Frank well enough to feel sure that he is not all right, when he can say that."

"Mamma, you make me feel as if we were all on the brink of bankruptcy, or a general break-up of some sort," Marian laughs. "In order to regain my balance, I really will go and see May to-day; the sight of May, lapped in luxury, and looking rich and securely established as she always does, will restore me to my normal condition of faith in our all having enough to live upon."

In pursuance of this determination, the two Miss Forests call on their brother's wife, this day, and for a wonder, find Frank at home. Nevertheless, though the whole atmosphere is redolent of wealth, Marian's spirit is not at all reassured, for Frank's soul seems to be dark within him, and May has too much the air of one who believes herself to be wronged to be a pleasant hostess.

However, they all stroll about for awhile in the pretty, deceptive, well-shrubbed garden, which stretches itself behind the house, and the sisters try to feel that they are welcome, and the brother tries to delude himself into the belief that they think that they are so. They advert casually to the fact of their not having seen one another lately, and then Marian says,

"To tell the truth, our visit was to you May, entirely, to-day; we expected to find that Frank had gone up to the office as usual."

The words are no sooner out of her mouth than she feels that she has made a mistake. Frank looks annoyed, and May looks triumphantly disagreeable, as fair, sweet, smiling, suave women can look when they fancy they have been wronged, and know that they have avenged themselves.

"Marian is surprised that you can tear yourself from the magazine even for one day, Frank," the wife says with a little vicious emphasis.

"Is it going well, Frank?" Marian asks cheerfully. "I've seen it capitally noticed somewhere," she adds in her desire to say something pleasant about her brother's last hobby.

"Then you have been more fortunate than I have been," May answers quickly. "I see it called weak and a failure, in every paper I take up."

"You don't take up many then," Frank says; "a failure it may prove eventually, but weak no one with an ounce of brains can ever believe it to be."

"It's not the kind of magazine that I care to see on my table," May says virtuously, "it's so light and worldly. As my brother says, it's not literature at all; I am sorry, because it would look better if I had it about, wouldn't it?"

"Better for you, or for the magazine?" Marian asks promptly, for she is on her mettle now, and her brother's wife will get no quarter from her, if that brother's wife deals a foul blow at Frank.

"For the magazine of course I mean," May simpers; "Frank can't expect me to do anything but condemn it, for it leads him into wasting money, and neglecting his other duties, and—I will say it, Frank—encouraging the audacity of a woman who ought not to be encouraged, and who dares to think she can write."

They are standing on the peaceful well-cut green sward, under the sweeping branches of a weeping elm as May brings her angry disclaimer to a conclusion, and waves the fiery cross aloft. The Forest girls are cool enough on the ordinary occasions of life; they neither show much feeling, nor do they conceal much. But they have the feeling of fidelity to the family well rooted in their hearts, and now when they hear Kate scorned, and Frank flouted, they cry "havoc!" and let loose the dogs of war," upon Mrs. Frank Forest.

"You're not speaking of our cousin Kate, are you?" Marian asks hotly, "because if you are——"

"Don't force conclusions, Marian," Frank whispers hastily, "and for mercy's sake let the subject of that unlucky magazine alone; I'm in a hole about it, and I don't exactly see how I am to get out of it——"

He pauses, and Marian finds that her brother and herself have ebbed away from the others during this brief colloquy.

"It's a success?" she questions nervously, for in her heart she is very proud of this clever brother of hers, whose brains

have always brought them renown hitherto. He shakes his head.

"Not a success! Frank! have done with it then. My boy, you of all people can't afford to fail."

"My dear little sister, if I had a sou of my own I should succeed," he says, as he leans his arm over her shoulder, and Marian feels that he is all her own brother again, and that she can defy May the money-giver, who never allows them to forget that she does give the money.

"If you had a sou of your own it would succeed; do you mean that, as you haven't the sou, it won't?"

"It's a venture, a scheme you know, a thing that would pay for itself over and over again if plenty of pluck and money is put into it; but I'm cramped and fettered! May's money is all tied up so tightly that I can't touch it without going to her trustees and offering them explanations; moreover, I don't care to risk anything that isn't altogether my own."

"You feel there is a risk then?"

"There is always a risk," he says evasively, and Marian gets nearer to him in the way she was wont to do in their old days of squabbling, and says,

"Out with it Frank? are you free, or are you fettered? does The Unwarrantable pay you sufficiently well to make you impervious to May's lax sympathy? for I see that she does not like it."

"The Unwarrantable will drag me into the slough of despond for a time, but I shall come out with gloriously burnished wings," he says, hopefully. "In the meantime I don't want to see a family feud established. We had better get on now, for May doesn't like to see a rival near the throne."

His sister paces along by his side in silence for a few moments, then she says,

"We're capital friends, aren't we, Frank? but even a friend can't ask you outright, 'What does it all mean?'"

"It means—look for yourself, Marian, and see what it means," he answers impatiently, as Mrs. Constable and Mrs. Grange drift down upon them, with an air of having the right to be there that is infinitely disagreeable to the Forests.

"Frank being the only gentleman of the party it's hardly fair of you to monopolise him so entirely," Mrs. Constable says with a little mock air of badinage.

"Frank being my only brother, and I not having seen him for some weeks, it's hardly a thing to be wondered at that I should like to have a few words with him

quietly," Marian says, and she puts her hand on her brother's arm as she speaks, and makes manifest that she does mean to stand on her rights, and not meekly lay her sword at the feet of the Constables.

"If I were May, I should have a sunk croquet ground made here," Mrs. Grange says, fussing about within the radius of a yard of them.

"It would spoil the lawn," Frank says suavely. This matter of a sunk croquet ground has been mooted before, and he has expressed himself as averse to it. Rare shrubs are dotted about on the lawn, and at least a dozen of them would have to be sacrificed, if the sunk croquet ground is carried into effect.

"But if May cares more for croquet than she does for the lawn," Mrs. Grange begins pugnaciously, "it seems to me, as she has no one to please but herself, that she is foolish not to have it done."

"Frank cares more for the lawn than for croquet," Marian says quietly; and at this Mrs. Constable bristles up, and says,

"Under the circumstances, Frank can hardly object to May doing what she pleases with her own."

"She may sink the whole place as far as I'm concerned," Frank says bitterly; "the sooner the better too. I'm tired of being consulted, and, when I give an opinion, defied."

"What is Frank snarling about now?" May says, coming up, with the flush of annoyance on her face; "there is always something to upset me when we have these family meetings. It makes me wish that I lived miles away from any of you."

"How you can, in May's state of health, too, Frank," Mrs. Constable says, in a whisper, to poor Frank, who is smarting under the conviction that his sisters are feeling both pity and shame for him.

"Oh, please, mamma, don't make any appeals for me," May says touchily; "I can take care of myself, fortunately, for he never tries to take any care of me, or to save me any trouble or worry."

"Shall we finish this discussion in private, May?" Frank says, with a hard laugh; "it's very entertaining to us, of course, but possibly my sisters may find it embarrassing."

"We must admit that Frank is a very considerate brother," Mrs. Grange says, bringing herself prominently into the discussion in an exasperating manner.

"I wish you would not go on driving at a subject in this way," May whines out



peevishly; "Frank doesn't say anything now—I'd much rather you did speak out, Frank, and say you're annoyed when you are annoyed—but I shall feel it in his manner by-and-by; and oh! dear, I wish over and over again that I hadn't married, to be made nervous and upset in this way," she winds up, bursting into a fit of hysterical sobbing.

"It's all as miserable as it can be," the Forest girls are obliged to confess to their mother, when they are cross-questioned by her. "May has alienated the very slight love Frank had for her at one time altogether now; and she shakes her money bags before his eyes every moment in the most humiliating way. Mother, it would have been a thousand times better if he had married Kate."

The days, after this, for some time, are marked by no particular event. May fractiously contrives to make herself weak and ailing, and Frank, out of the torpor which ensues on heart-chill, refrains from trying to persuade her into taking better care of herself. He drinks the bitter cup of being dependent on his wife's bounty, to the dregs once or twice, for money melts away in a marvellous manner, directly it gets into the office of The Unwarrantable, but his sanguine spirit always tells him that it will restore itself tenfold to his purse, purified and refined.

The relations between the husband and wife grow cooler and cooler, and mean-natured as May is, justice demands that the statement be made that the fault is not all on the side of the short-sighted woman. May is faulty, but Frank is not faultless.

It is after things have come to this stagnant pass for some little while between them, that Frank meets his cousin Kate, accidentally, one day, and persuades her, against her better judgment, to go with him into Kensington Gardens, and walk about for an hour, under the shadow of the grand old trees.

"The magazine is turning out a failure, and my marriage is a worse mistake still; Kate, my only hope is in your friendship, and a change has come over you."

"Fortunately—for you are married. I'll be truest friend—most affectionate cousin—sternest counsellor to you, Frank, if you'll let me," she answers.

"I should be a hound if I asked for more," he says, looking piteously at her, and she gives him back a frank glance, free from all sentiment, and all danger.

"But I can't bear to think that another fellow has gained what I—threw away," he pleads.

"Now I would make you love your wife, if I could," she says. "How different we are, after all! If I could turn your heart to May, I would do it, and be happy in doing it; but you would see me solitary hearted still, you say. Frank, there is no friendship in that feeling; it's the offspring of selfishness; in indulging it, you are being disloyal to May, and to me, and to your own nature."

She speaks excitedly, and even as she is speaking they come out near enough to the drive to see May pass in her Victoria, and for May to see them.

### ROUGHS AND ROWDIES.

THE "rough" in England, and the "rowdy" in the United States, form an unpleasant variety of the human species, and one which seems to be peculiar to these countries. Unhappily, there are brutal, degraded, and violent people, in all parts of the world; but there are no roughs, or rowdies, properly so called, except among the English speaking race. The characteristics of these savages are their ignorance, their recklessness, their ferocity, their intemperance, their filthiness of speech, the cruelty of their amusements, and their utter disregard of all decency, propriety, and respect for the feelings, or even for the existence, of other people. They form a class, or caste, by themselves, speak a jargon which respectable people do not always understand, and are the veritable pariahs of our civilization. They look upon a policeman as their natural enemy, even when they are not criminals by profession.

There are many points of resemblance between the English and American varieties of the tribe, and also many points of difference. The English, and especially the London "rough" is often a thief; but the American "rowdy" is merely a strong, violent, abusive, and drunken blackguard. The English rough often kicks his victim to death, with heavy clogs, or high-lows; the American rowdy prefers to assassinate with the pistol, or the bowie-knife. The English rough would as readily kick a woman to death as he would a man; indeed, he often prefers to kick women, children, and helpless old people to death, rather than measure his brutal strength



against an antagonist who might be more brutal than himself. The American rowdy, even the lowest of the low, and the vilest of the vile, has sufficient self-control, and self-respect, to forbear violence towards women. Is there anything in the laws of the United States, that can account for this difference between the blackguards of the two hemispheres? I think there is, and shall point it out hereafter.

Meanwhile—to deal with the subject on its broadest basis—how can the existence, either of the “rough” in England, or the “rowdy” with many aliases, in America, be explained—side by side, with their non-existence in France, Italy, Germany, Spain, and other European countries? In charging the grand jury at Leeds, in July last, Mr. Justice Denman commented upon the great and alarming increase of violent and savage assaults, and declared that in his opinion, “if we could erase from existence the excessive drinking which unfortunately prevailed among the highly paid working population of this country, we should then erase more than one-half, probably two-thirds of all those violent and brutal offences with which the courts of justice have to deal.” “There is,” Falstaff says, “much virtue in an ‘if,’” and, of course, “if” drunkenness could be abolished or greatly diminished, the crimes that arise out of drunkenness would be diminished in like proportion. But how is the great British nation to make its people sober? On this point the learned judge expressed no opinion, though the way is obvious enough, if the Legislature could but be induced to act upon it, to make the next if not the present generation of Englishmen as sober as the people of France, Germany, and other European countries. Society and law cannot prevent drunkenness, but society, without law, can render it unfashionable. In the last century it was the rich and not the poor who got drunk. To be “drunk as a lord” was a common saying. Now the rich are sober, and if a man in the rank of a nobleman or gentleman is publicly seen intoxicated, even but once, he loses caste and position. It was not any law against intemperance that reformed the rich, neither will it be any law for the prevention and punishment of intemperance that will reform the poor. Deeper agencies must effect the work, and happily these agencies can be brought to bear, though slowly yet surely, upon the next generation, powerless as they may be upon the

generation which has already grown to man’s estate.

A case of English ruffianism, worse than any rowdism of the new world, which occurred on the night of the last bank holiday, will exemplify the brutishness which somehow or other has got into the nature of the ignorant street Arabs, grown to maturity both of age and crime, and which it must be the business of statesmanship not only to punish in this generation but to eradicate in the next. On that evening—I borrow a newspaper report—a Liverpool porter, one Richard Morgan, was proceeding homewards with his wife and brother. All three had spent the day in the country, and were perfectly sober. On their way home, at the corner of a small alley, they passed a knot of ruffians lounging about. One of the gang followed Morgan, importuning him for sixpence to buy something to drink. Morgan replied, “Go and work for your drink as I do.” Before the words were well out of his mouth he was knocked down, and a whole posse of roughs, associates of the scoundrel who accosted him, were kicking him upon his head, his face, his neck, his collar bones, his legs, his chest, his loins, and the pit of his stomach. He was kicked from one side of the street to the other; knocked out of the road into the gutter, out of the gutter into the road, and out of the road again to the pavement, until, at last, a crowd, attracted to the scene by the screams of his wife, called for the police. Upon this the assailants took to their heels, but one of the gang, after a desperate attempt to use his knife, was taken into custody. Poor Morgan himself was taken to the hospital and died within a few hours. He was literally kicked and hacked to death. His skull was broken, his ribs were fractured, and he sustained terrible internal injuries.

Murders will and do occur in all countries; but a murder so foul, so wanton, so beastly as this (there is no better word for it), could scarcely occur anywhere except in England, and among the classes born, as it were, in the gutter, and left to wallow in it, uncared for and untaught, during those early days, when, if the State had been wise, it might have taken effective steps to have made men of them, instead of allowing them to develop into ruffians and cowards.

The American rowdies are, as has been already stated, a shade less savage than their English compeers. They never kick their wives or other women to death, and

if they murder at all, think that a revolver is a more civilised weapon than their heels. The reason of this difference in favour of the American rowdy is that before he was born, a system of national education was established and enforced, and that if not very highly educated, he has been sufficiently educated and civilised at school, to learn to respect women—of itself, if there were nothing more, a very considerable part of a liberal education. Twenty-eight years ago the writer of these lines addressed a series of letters to a distinguished statesman, advocating the establishment of a system of national education, which, had it been established and worked at that time, would most probably, if not certainly, have thinned the ranks of the roughs in 1874, and left very few of the breed to plague us and disgrace us, below the age of five-and-twenty years. Three years ago, a system of education was established under the auspices of Mr. W. E. Forster, M.P. The system was very incomplete, and over its meagre details sectarians in religion are still squabbling. The act will doubtless help to civilise the roughs of the future, but is not comprehensive enough to extirpate the breed, or make of the lower classes of our English cities and great centres of labour, a class as refined and gentle as the corresponding class in Prussia and Germany, where national education is a long-established fact. In those countries of the same race and blood as our own, rowdiness and wife kicking are unknown. The people drink, it is true, a good deal of beer, but they do not madden themselves with it, or poison themselves with gin. They indulge in rational and elevating amusements, and take no delight in brutal and cruel sports. And these results have been attained by the action of the State and Government, which insisted upon the education of the whole people, and carried its wise intentions into effect in a manner much more complete, systematic, and beneficial, both to the bodies and minds of the multitude, than our English statesmanship has ever considered possible or worthy of being attempted. It was stated in the letters of twenty-eight years ago, that it was impossible to open a book of statistical returns relative to crime, without seeing that out of every ten criminals nine were either entirely ignorant of the commonest rudiments of education—reading, writing, and arithmetic—or imperfectly acquainted with them. Of fifteen thousand

prisoners in one section of the country, according to the report of Mr. Frederick Hill, only one in fifteen was able to read and write well, only one in sixty who could read and write imperfectly had ever derived any real and useful knowledge from the acquisition, while upwards of three thousand could not read at all, and upwards of eight thousand could not sign their names." No improvement took place in the long interval between that time and the passing of Mr. Forster's Act; and if any improvement is to result in the future, it is yet too soon to ascertain, or even to calculate it. But it is not too soon to convince ourselves that the teaching of reading, writing, and arithmetic to the children of the poor, and giving them a smattering of theology or religion, is not sufficient to fit them for the great battle of honest life in our crowded islands. The State requires citizens who shall be a help, not a burden, who shall be a glory, not a disgrace, and who, if evil times come upon us, and we have to struggle with foreign foes for, possibly, our national existence, shall know how to fight like brave men, and not like cowards or the kickers of women. I repeat, as more applicable to 1874 than it was to 1846—"that in addition to instruction in the elementary branch of reading, writing, and arithmetic, a thorough system of national education should provide for the physical as well as the mental and moral training of her sons. There should be baths and large airy playgrounds attached to each school, with facilities for athletic and invigorating games. . . . And not only these means of physical and mental culture which the State, without alarming the jealousies of any class or sect, might be fairly allowed to employ, that of music should not be forgotten. Its humanising influence is well known by the rich and felt by the poor. Its preventive and reformatory power is of immense value, and should be brought into operation even in the commonest primary and elemental schools." Nor even at that time was the teaching of music, though derided in England, a new thing in the schools of Germany and other parts of Europe. "In Prussia," wrote Mr. Horace Mann, of Massachusetts, in the report of his educational tour in that country, "all the school teachers employed by the State are masters, not only of vocal, but of instrumental music. One is as certain to see a violin as a black-board in every school-room.

Generally speaking, I found that the teachers could play upon the piano-forte, the organ, or other instrument. Music is not only taught as an accomplishment, but is used as a recreation. It is found a moral means of great efficacy. Its practice promotes health. It disarms anger, softens rough and turbulent natures, socialises and brings the whole mind as it were into a state of fusion, from which condition the teacher can mould it into what form he wills, as it cools and hardens."

If music, as the poets say, "have charms to soothe the savage breast"—if he "who has none of it in his soul, is fit for treason, stratagems, and spoils"—shall music not have power, if instilled into the young rough when he is at school, and compelled to go there, have power to humanise even the gutter children and street Arabs, who are our present shame and the feeders of our prisons, and train them up gradually into a gentleness and propriety of conduct, unknown to their neglected and untutored fathers and mothers? The ancients, at whose wisdom, real or supposed, we sometimes presumptuously sneer—as if wisdom came into the world for the first time in the days of the railway, the steam engine, and the electric telegraph—thoroughly understood and appreciated the value of music as an educator and a refiner of the savage nature. Polybius, in the fourth book of his history, is at the pains to explain why the Cynaethians, who were originally Arcadians, were so cruel and violent as compared with the gentler race from whom they sprang. He states that the youth of Arcadia, in obedience to the laws, were habituated from their early childhood to sing hymns and poems in honour of the gods and heroes of their country, as well as the melodies or airs of Philoxenus and Timotheus; to sing in bands or classes at the festivals of Bacchus. Even in their assemblies and parties of pleasure, the Arcadians diverted themselves less with conversation or the relation of stories than in singing by turns and inviting each other reciprocally to this exercise. "But the Cynaethians," he adds, "living in the most rude and savage parts of the country, neglected those arts, of which they had all the more need; and, being subject to mutual divisions and contests, they at length became so fierce and barbarous that there was not a city in Greece where such frequent and savage crimes were committed as in that of Cynaetha . . . . We have," he says, "related these things,

first, that other cities may be prevented from censuring the customs of the Arcadians, or lest some of the people of Arcadia themselves, upon false prejudices that the study of music is permitted them only as a superficial amusement, should be prevailed upon to neglect this part of their discipline; in the second place, to engage the Cynaethians, if the gods should permit, to humanise and soften their tempers by an application to the liberal arts, and especially to music. For this is the only means by which they can ever be dispossessed of that ferocity which they have contracted."

Mrs. Grundy may sneer at the wisdom of the Greeks, or at the idea of teaching the street Arabs, and the gutter children of London, and other cities, to sing, or to learn anything but the three R's and the catechism; but without undervaluing the three R's and the catechism, and most cordially wishing and hoping that all the little ones born amid our slums of vice, poverty, and wretchedness, may get as far as the three R's and the catechism, and a great deal further, I for one, notwithstanding Mrs. Grundy, and all her class, think, and maintain, that the state owes some education to the bodies, as well as to the souls of its citizens; and that if it teaches them how to become strong, cheerful, law-abiding, brave, as well as tolerably literate, it will supplement the work of imperfect school education greatly to its own advantage and to that of every individual in the community. It is well to read, well to use the multiplication table, well to sign one's name. All these humble accomplishments are humanising and elevating to the degraded nature of the roughs and the rowdies; but is it not well to swim, to sing, and to be neither intemperate in drinking nor in kicking? I think so: and think, moreover, that the time is coming when most people will be of my opinion, and when the state will act on the opinion of the majority. As for the veteran and inveterate roughs and ruffians, we must do the best we can with them, and nothing better can be proposed than the "often and deep scarification" of their scoundrel backs, as advocated by "The Uncommercial Traveller,"\* together with such change of the law as shall make offences against the person liable to as great a severity of punishment as offences against property. Our great

\* See ALL THE YEAR ROUND, October 10th, 1868.

business now, and for the future, is to prevent the growth and cultivation of any more roughs or ruffians to be the terror of our streets, and the disgrace of our civilisation.

## LEARNING TO COOK.

### LESSON THE FIRST.

"WAIT a little; wait a little. We are not quite ready. I will tell you when you may go."

We were some dozen pupils. We were novices, every one. We were all more or less in trepidation. Each had paid her two guineas for the fourteen or sixteen lessons that were to come; each was eager for the promised instruction; each was wondering as to the manner in which the instruction would begin.

"Have I taken your name down? And yours? And yours?" the same lady in charge asked, coming into the midst of us, and looking scrutinisingly round.

"Here's three of us!" cried a new pupil at this moment entering, conveying with her a couple of girl-undergraduates more.

They who accompanied her were young golden-haired, sweet-faced, fair-skinned; they looked shy and apprehensive. But she who spoke for them was of more experience, gave a slight toss to her managing head, had a smile playing at the corners of her mouth, accounting for the comic style of her address; and the key she struck upon seemed to be the key the whole officeful was prepared for, and by one touch of it she shifted us all into harmony pleasantly.

A whole officeful, it has been put. That is what we were. We were to assemble there at ten o'clock, and there we stood, waiting. The office was a very small new brick building, partitioned into outer lobby and inner presence-chamber, approached by a special breakage in a grey wood fence, separated from the main buildings by a gritty gravel path. It was decidedly unfitted for its purpose; it was decidedly uncomfortable. It had no place for the coquettish hats some of the pupils removed from still more coquettish heads. It had no place for the cobweb fichus, the delicate capes and shawls, that had covered up high ruffles and dainty morning dresses; it had no place for the other various items of umbrellas, gloves, and veils. These all had to be laid down, when the two small tables were too heaped up for further heaping, upon a chair, upon the mantel-piece, upon the floor. So had the more

solid head and shoulder gear belonging to the more solid of the party. But that was no matter. Bundle them down, push them aside with the foot—anything! Treat them, in short, just as the practical wearers would have treated them, when one business was ended, and when, with heads up and eyes expectant, they were chafing to commence business number two. Nothing was likely to put these ladies out at that waiting moment, when earnest resolution was at boiling point with them; and as not even ignominious treatment of pet finery had disturbed the serenity of the rest of the smiling party, there we all stood, anxious for the right moment to come.

Smooth young arms (and some older ones) were bared to above the elbow; morning dresses were protected by kitchen aprons, bibbed. There was a brown print apron; there were check muslin aprons; there were coarse aprons; there were aprons with pockets in, trimmed round with braid; there were—— But before the whole of the entries could be correctly catalogued, the door of the cooking-school proper (the other side of the gritty gravel path) opened, and our group had to sunder itself as well as it was able, and fall back.

It was a cook who had come to us. A real cook—a teacher—one of those we had paid to learn from, whom we were disposed to treat with profoundest respect. She was a satisfactory personage assuredly; plump, dimpled, wholesome, double-chinned, black-eyed. She smiled her way into the presence-chamber; she greeted the lady in charge with a whispered word. It was our doom.

"You may go in now," was what we heard, in echo. "The cooks are ready. Come with me."

We went, therefore, out into the air, across the path, filing in through the kitchen door. No—in through the scullery door. The scullery particularly; that being the principle on which we were admitted; the principle from which there could be no departure, except on the payment of a guinea fine. The building in which we found ourselves was a long annexe, roofed with corrugated iron; scullery where it opened, and only kitchen when one had traversed this and passed through large doors beyond. It was scullery-work, then, that we were there, bare-armed and aproned, to do. Our only concern was a longing impatience to set about it.

But some little organisation and adjustment were first necessary.



"Let me see. You two go in to a range. And you two go in to a range. You three would like to work together? Very well; stay here, at the tins."

Thus were seven satisfactorily disposed of, and swept away.

"Now you, and you, go in to a gas stove. There, through there. And you, and you, go in to the other gas stove. So. Now, one of you must be at the knife-board. You'll do; it's light work to begin with. So."

That was a neat fixture of five more.

"And now—let me consider. You two to the sieves. Well, perhaps three of you: three are plenty of sieves this morning. Of a Monday there always are. That will do. Now there are just four more of you. That's right: that's just the number required."

The lady in charge was gone. She had finished. Her work for the moment was completed.

"Please will you come to the sink?"

"Oh!"

It was a sink, without any smoothing down, error, or indistinctness. But was it not part of the bargain, agreed for, stipulated, understood? To the sink we had to go. Two of us placed at one tap and trough, two of us at the other, as close as love-birds, with something other than cooing for occupation.

"Please, this is your tub, ma'am; and this yours. There's hot water in each, and a little soda. Here's a flannel, please, for you, ma'am, and one for you; and here's a piece of soap for each. Now I'll give you each a stew-pan. Please to wash it, inside and out, lid and handle and all, as clean as you can get it."

"Oh!"

There was again no smoothing down, rubbing away, rounding off of scarcely realised and objectionable corners. A veritable stew-pan was set down, splash, into each pupil's tub; a stew-pan eight or ten inches across, four or five inches high, with a flat lid to fit, and a long bayonet-like cruelly-inconvenient handle. There was not the least earthly reason, either, to clean the stew-pan, apparently. It was a good fine ruddy copper outside, and a nice silvery-white tin within. What was the use—

But everyone was bending down, intent on something. The centre of the scullery was quite a clear passage-way: all the pupils and cook-teachers were ranged round the walls, earnestly beginning or begun. It was perfectly absurd to think of being different to the rest—

"A-a-a-a-h!"

A suppressed shriek from the most slender of the four sinks, and a pair of upraised arms. "The water's so hot, it burns me! How can I get out the flannel? Whatever can I do?"

It was not affectation. The girl was tall, and thin, and delicate; fine lace shrouded her elbows, under her tucked sleeves; a modish ruffle was round her neck; her soft hair was prettily coiled round a perforated comb. (Lucy she shall be called here, for after distinction.) Was it likely she had ever dived her small fingers for hot house-flannel before, or come anything like so near to a sink-tub?

Well, and what should she do? Fling down the guinea fine, perhaps, and be released. Skittishly slip out, don the pretty hat and cape again, and let the original fee be the only damage? Scream, faint, make a hubbub, a sensation, set the place in convulsions, and call attention from all to an individual one? No. The distressed Lucy muffled the A flat in alt, and composed her slim hands, crimsoned as they were with their parboiling. It came to her, as it had come to the rest, that it was best, quietly and unostentatiously, to do what had to be done, to learn what had to be learnt, braving the ugliness and drudgery of the present, for the sake of the grace and feminine consistency of what, happily, was to come. Although unaccustomed fingers were in contact then with heat, and dirt, and grease, in a little while cool flour would be making those same fingers whiter still, syrups and sauces would be growing to perfection under them, jellies would be decorated by them, they would be deftly fashioning duchess crusts, croutons, and other culinary dainties, to make Somebody's table elegant, to make Somebody look up wonderingly pleased. It was worth while for this to take courage, to continue, to be quiet, to think of "learn to labour and to wait," and—do it.

Meanwhile it was the duty of the cook of the sinks (she shall here be christened Mrs. Cookett) to go from one of her four pupils to the other, giving an admonitory or encouraging word.

"Wash the outside first, please," was a concise order, given, generally, to all. "And, now, here's a saucerful of sand. Just soap your hands a bit, in this way. Then take up a little of your sand, and with the inside of your hand, the palm, look! rub away, like this, up the sides,



and at the bottom, and particularly in this crease, in here, as hard as you possibly can, just like I'm doing, till it all looks bright and beautiful!"

"The inside?" This was asked, perplexedly; in a voice appalled, if not full of awe.

"Yes, of course the inside. It's the inside I'm showing you. Didn't you understand, ma'am? The outside's different. I'll show you the outside, after."

So it had to be the inside; with the hand flat in, rubbing madly; with the finger-tips hit against the obstructive metal; with the rim digging red lines into the wrist. It was hot work in hot weather. It was only natural to appeal, precipitately, to Mrs. Cookett, whether enough rubbing had not been done.

Mrs. Cookett looked into the submitted stew-pan, with the precise official amount of criticism. "Well—yes—you're getting on very nicely, ma'am, but," looking closer, "this is all dirt, ma'am, these spots. This can all be rubbed away. Just see." And the disagreeable Mrs. Cookett (otherwise a nice, energetic, intelligent woman) rubbed her sand up as black as ebony, and left the sink, with an air that the pupil, unaware of such dirt, must be of very obtuse perceptions, and that cleanliness, embodied, had received a shock.

More rubbing, therefore; the flatted hand madder than before; led by the spirited determination that no black upheaving should, possibly, any way, be obtained this time, and that all must be pure and fair. It was. The determination answered. As a sequel, came copious directions how to expend as much force in glorifying the outside copper.

"Now it's the outside, please. You mix vinegar with your sand for that; to take out the stains. Just as much as you see me putting. But never put vinegar, or any acid, on to the tin inside. It makes it black."

"Are we to soap our hands, and rub the sand and vinegar on, just as before?"

"Just the same, ma'am. And rub very hard. As hard as you can. You see these stew-pans have been lying dirty since Saturday, and some of the stains will be very hard to get out."

Ah, there was a kind of knowing twinkle in Mrs. Cookett's clever eye, as she moved away. Undoubtedly, some of the stains were very hard to rub out; requiring such insane friction as made Lucy (amongst others) leave off, trembling, and utter an exhausted sigh.

The woman in Mrs. Cookett had momentary mastery over the teacher. "Supposing," she said, in a sweet spirit of conciliation, "you've got a bit of lemon-peel by you, and in most kitchens there's been lemon used, and you've got some lying about, you can just take the inside and rub it on the stains, and they'll go away at once. See!"

And in the most aggravating manner Mrs. Cookett produced an old half-lemon, and, presto, a rainbow-tinted spot effectually disappeared, leaving splendid copper underneath, with scarcely any rubbing at all! It only remained to go carefully so, over all the surface, to have all of it as good as new.

"Um!" whispered Lucy, when going on cheerfully with hope renewed; "might just as well have given us lemon at first, I think!"

Yes; but there might be a larder without any squeezed lemons; and there might be heedless fellow-servants flinging squeezed lemons away, without thinking of the kitchen-maids to whose labour they could bring so much pleasant economisation. It was well to be taught the rough travelling, as well as the royal road; and soon, by means of both, the copper surfaces underwent transformation, and became brilliant indeed.

One more chapter of directions, however, before the inexorable Mrs. Cookett would be appeased.

"Here's a bit of stick for you, ma'am; and a bit of stick for you. Put it under a corner of the flannel, like this, and push it under the handle, hard, and all round where the handles join, to finish it off. Yes. That's the way. And when you've done that, it'll be finished; and nicely."

In the far-rearward memory of one of the pupils, however (for her revolutionary propinquities she shall be called Parisina), there was a hazy understanding of the tradition that the inside of a saucepan should be wiped dry. This was brought to the front—bewildered—in somewhat faltering method.

Mrs. Cookett's perceptions did not show her the value of that falter. It meant that the recollection was no doubt wrong, was foolish, was a piece of heterodoxy that ought to be hewn down to the roots. It could have been annihilated by one curled lip and tone of scorn. But it appealed to Mrs. Cookett's real love of thoroughness, to Mrs. Cookett's better inner consciousness of what was right; and she gave it

quick acknowledgment. Alas! she revealed a piece of weakness in her establishment in doing so that Parisina (being safe on this ground) was quick to notice.

"Yes," agreed Mrs. Cookett, "we dry it, with a cloth. It should be another flannel, on purpose; wrung as dry as you can; but we're short of dish-cloths—we shall have some more soon, you know;" for she saw, brightly, how this might meet Parisina's interpretation. "So as I can't give you a dish-cloth, we'll take——"

She looked round to dresser, to table, to little sideways shelf.

"This!"

"This" being a fine white linen duster, crossed with crimson threads; and "this" causing Parisina to turn her eyes roofward, and to protest afterwards (on fitting opportunity) that, "if servants took wrong cloths for wrong purposes, they were called slatternly; that she should have thought that a school for teaching mistresses the best way, ought to have had the best materials." However, nothing audible proceeded. The stewpans received a rubbing from the linen cloth; the stewpans' lids were laid just resting on them, and yet a little alongside in the approved method (for better sweetening and airing); they were all together placed in a certain corner, where the morning's work would, by-and-by, wholly be reviewed.

Then was shot out an odd breakage of the scrubbing and scouring sounds that by this time had almost become the same as silence.

"Any lady like to scrub a kitchen-table?"

It was a kind question, called out, loudly, by a new cook. The same standing on the list, Cook No. Three.

What a saucy lass she was, this young woman. It was evident she came into the midst of the tucked-up dresses, small throats, and gold chains, with the lowest estimate of the whole party. She had her own neat little figure in perfect kitchen order (with the most Dolly Vardenish cap on the pinnacle of her chignon); her brown eyes shot out just as much contemptuous sort of toleration for the game they saw being played, as her proper knowledge of "her place" rendered irrepressible. It was good to see her countenance, to note the tones of her firm, telling voice.

"Any lady like to scrub a kitchen-table?"

The emphasis on the "lady" and the

"like," and the roll off afterwards of the "kitchen-table." It was a challenge, not an invitation, and it fell as flat as the little utterer knew it would fall. It left her to shake her starched skirts, as she was stalking off, satisfactorily lady-less.

"If," said one of the four sinkers, timidly, as she saw her going—"if—there is no one else—I—shall be—glad—to—scrub a kitchen-table."

It was better still to see the stop, and the wonder, and the ready rally upmost of superior mother-wit.

"You!" with a look and a still, contemptuous pause. "You! Oh!" And then at express speed, "You won't be let off the sink this morning, I can tell you!"

And the puss was right, as she tossed herself away. At least, right, partly. Mrs. Cookett had only been absent a moment to collect further horrible implements; she was close at hand now, to lay claim to more of her pupils' services.

"You must do a iron saucepan, please, before you go," she put in to the timid worker (Modesta). "You must all do a iron saucepan, and a iron spoon, and then you've finished."

She stepped back to lift in the first of the saucepans, and there it protruded itself from the tub, a most unmistakably objectionable undertaking.

"Ugh! what a monster!" was Lucy's sharp ejaculation, like a little shudder.

It had to be done, though; and it was done. Some especial vigour was bestowed upon it. So much so, that a quiet request had to be made for some more sand, the saucerful appropriated having been all vehemently washed and scrubbed away.

"You must please to be careful of the sand," said Mrs. Cookett, grudgingly, tilting out a fresh supply. "Please not to use more than you can help."

Parisina added this to her mem. about the dish-cloths, and the scouring proceeded. It took twenty minutes from the first contact of the saucepan with the water, to the last rubbing of the palm, inside, with sand and soap. Twenty minutes. On which Parisina observed (at her fitting opportunity) that "if servants didn't keep their saucepans as clean as that one, mistresses had no right to be angry, for if servants took twenty minutes for each, what would mistresses say then?" In place of any comment upon which, there came praise of the way the particular pan had been finished, and the substitution of the iron spoon.

"Then, please," said Mrs. Cookett, whilst

this last little article was being vigorously cleaned, "you'll understand, enamelled saucepans only want soap and water, unless there's black spots in them, and then you must rub with sand. You needn't do a enamelled saucepan, as you've done a iron one; you've only got to do one or the other, and now, as your spoon's clean, you've finished."

The sink must be vacated; that was the meaning of Mrs. Cookett's congé. The small but severe course of her instruction had been run. It was very like sudden orphaning, to be shifted into the middle of the scullery there, unhomed, vagrant. Decidedly the best thing was to try and fasten on to a new cook by an appeal.

"May I do a sieve? I haven't done any."

It was put quite in the tone of a beggar's petition; very humbly, tremolo and (as if) with extended hand.

"Oh, don't talk to me about sieves! You mustn't say another word to me about sieves all the morning! I haven't another, and I shan't have."

Poor Cook No. Four. She was a fine tall woman, straight as an arrow, clean as a pin. She had a capital head-piece, a clear speech, a splendid energy, and she was bustling about, with many matters on her mind, and her group of pupils not the least of them. Besides, her tart rejoinder was not to the petitioner. It was to another teacher, Cook No. Five, Mrs. Sweetman (for one more christening), who took it with the indulgence that was expected, and with the prudent silence that came from the exercise of a placid temper. Nevertheless, the petitioner heard it; and the petitioner, aware of inopportunity, shrunk. This was observed by Mrs. Sweetman, with her ready sympathy, her meek deportment, her quiet way.

"I'll find you a place at the tins, ma'am, if you'll wait a minute," she said, in low and pleasant tones. "There'll be one directly when this lady's done. There. This is a ice-mould. And this is wet whitening, and this is dry. You'll please to take this flannel, and dip it in the wet, and rub it all over the mould. Then you'll please to take this leather, and dip it in the dry, and that's to polish with. And for all these pattern-parts, where you can't get the leather, here's this brush. Yes, that's the way, ma'am, nicely."

All did seem smoother too, with (comparatively) innocuous whitening, *vice* heat and grease and hurt-wrists and splash; and to stand at a dry board, albeit it was

to rub with equal vigour, assumed quite the reviving influence of promotion. Under the hand, and under sister-pupils' hands, were tart-tins, ladles, sugar-dusters, nutmeg-graters, salt and flour boxes, dripping-pans, tiny cream-tins, tins for cabinet-puddings, and pound-cakes; and as they stood in file, finished, with quite a silver-shine upon them, they brought agreeable visions of hoped-for work to come.

But even before the ice-mould could quite, conscientiously, be laid aside, the lady in charge came into the scullery, said, "Twelve o'clock, ladies. Work is over for to-day;" and our first lesson in our new art was over.

#### IN HARVEST-TIME.

WITH golden sheaves half-laden, stands the wain,  
Whilst the young roan neighs out impatiently,  
And old black Jessie paws with restless hoof  
The close-reaped yellow stubble.

'Tis the hour,  
For rest and noonday meal; the waggoner  
Bacon and bread in hand, low-squats him on  
A fallen shock of corn; and quick the can  
With home-brewed filled, doth pass from lip to lip,  
Amid the group of toilers, damp of brow,  
Tanned with the heat of sweltering harvest sun,  
But light-content, with ease of heart unknown,  
To us, who in great cities, gain our bread.

Stalwart, and sturdy-limbed, the waggoner's lad,  
A sheepish blush upon his sun-burn'd face,  
Speaks with rough courtship to his Phillida,  
As she, farm-maiden, rose-cheeked, honest-eyed,  
Twists, upward smiling, in her tangled hair,  
The pale blue bells of the convolvulus.  
Ah, simple souls! whose lot it is to pass  
Your lives remote from city's vast highway,  
The greater blessing yours! And though it be  
Ye make not in the world renowned names,  
Yet the small mound, that presently shall lie  
Above ye, with its daisy-mingled green,  
Shall speak more eloquent than monument,  
The sweet, pure story of two stainless lives!

#### THE STORY OF STERICKER.

OF course it doesn't really matter in the least; but I have a distinct recollection that the opera of the evening was the oft-repeated *Trovatore* of Verdi. I had been wondering yet once again at the peculiar circumstances attending that crime of infanticide of which the gipsy woman, Azucena, had been guilty. Having resolved upon burning the baby of her deadliest foe, it was certainly, to say the least of it, a stupid mistake to make, that roasting of her own child instead. I had arrived at the trite decision that really she had not deserved to be a mother, in regard to her proved incapacity for taking care of her offspring. The invisible tenor—I rather think it was Tamberlik, for I am referring, or about to refer to something

that happened some years since—had delivered his famous song from his prison in the tower, and forthwith, being much applauded, had appeared upon the stage; by special permission, as it were, or upon some sudden relenting of his fierce jailor, the Count de Luna; to bow gratefully, to receive further congratulations, and then to return to captivity, in order that the story might proceed in the usual way. All this we had gone through very comfortably indeed. We had really enjoyed our Verdi, even to his trombones; the soprano had sung her best, her soaring notes seeming to ring musically against the very ceiling of the house, like good coin upon a counter; the basso had produced rich tones from strange depths, as a bounteous host might bring forth luscious and potent wines from subterranean regions; the tenor had shot amongst us, now and then, a shrill C above the line, that had lodged in our ears, rending them, as though it had been a barbed arrow. Altogether the representation had been most unexceptionable and admirable; when suddenly there occurred an excitement in the theatre which could not be ascribed to Verdi, or his interpreters. Something of a gasp was audible, something of a cry; the sound of something falling, of people rising from their seats, and questioning and conversing in hurried sentences without regard to the transactions of the stage.

An opera glass had fallen from one of the upper private boxes on to the head of a gentleman sitting in the stalls.

Now I had seen the glass fall; had seen a round, white, braceleted arm and a gloved hand stretched out to arrest, as it seemed to me, its descent. But, of course, it was all done in a moment: so rapidly, indeed, that there was scarcely time for the thing to impress itself upon my mind, and the instant after it had happened, I began to doubt whether I had really seen what I had seen. It was so much more as though I had imagined the thing than actually witnessed it.

However, that the accident had occurred there could be no question. The gentleman, upon whose cranium the glass had descended, had been carried into the lobby. He was said to be stunned, if not killed, by the blow. A belief prevailed that his skull had been fractured. In any case, an ugly wound had been inflicted upon his head, which, by the way, was bald, except for a crescent-shaped fringe at the back, and a few scanty locks arranged over the crown.

The blood had flowed freely, dabbling and disfiguring his white cravat and embroidered shirt front. It was really, altogether, a very shocking thing. There was no attending to the opera after it. The tragic matters happening upon the stage were quite quenched by this serious accident in the stalls. Who could now care about the Count de Luna's beheading his long-lost brother, or Azucena's bitter scream of "*Sei vendicata, O madre*"? The fate of our bald comrade was of much more concern to us. I hastened to make enquiries as to how he fared.

He was not dead: so much was presently clear. In fact he was gradually recovering consciousness. Someone was loosening his collar and tie; someone else was dabbing his wound with a wet cloth. He had just risen from his seat, I learned, when the opera-glass struck him, and he had fallen back as though he had been shot. But I distrusted this account afterwards, when I ascertained that he had been seen to stoop forward and pick up the opera-glass, which, indeed, he still held tightly in his hand. He was breathing heavily, rocking a little to and fro, and moaning at intervals. He was a middle-aged man, pursy of figure, with luxuriant whiskers that might owe something of their rich brown hue to art, linked together, as it were, by a branch line of moustache running across his upper lip, and with a shaven chin such as, in deference to the peculiar and unpicturesque fancy of the Commander-in-Chief, has been for some time the vogue with the British army. Still I was of opinion, though I hardly know on what grounds exactly, that the unfortunate man was not a member of the military service of my country. Then he started, lifted his head and turned an eye towards me. Immediately, but to my very great surprise, I recognised him.

It was Stericker. I have said, advisedly, that he turned an eye towards me. His other eye was fast closed, seemed, indeed, to have sunk back into his head.

Then he moved a tremulous hand in my direction. He knew me, it seemed. He tried to speak; but it was some time before he could utter any intelligible sound. At last we discovered his meaning. He had lost something which he desired us, meaning myself and the bystanders, to search for.

Search was instituted accordingly. After a while, very near to the stall he had occupied, there was picked up—a glass eye! It was a new fact to me, though of



course it was not a convenient opportunity for pondering upon it, that Stericker wore or possessed a glass eye. I had never perceived any deficiency in his organ of sight, nor even suspected it. The glass eye had always seemed to me a genuine article: by which I mean one that he could really see with.

He was gratified at the recovery of his glass eye. He was well enough now to dust it with his handkerchief, and—but this he did not accomplish without considerable difficulty—to replace it in the socket it usually filled. Certainly the aspect of that portion of his visage was benefited by the more tenanted and furnished character it now again assumed. He then took from his pocket a miniature mirror, not much larger than a crown-piece, and gazed at the reflection it furnished of his artificial organ. He desired to see that it was properly adjusted, and what artists call "in drawing," with regard to his other features. There was something curious I thought about the severity with which his real eye scrutinised his sham one; while yet, as it seemed, the sham eye was of more importance to him, more cherished by him, than the real one.

But something else was missing. A shirt-stud. For this also diligent search was made; and again with success. It was found on the floor of the lobby—a curious looking stud: a pearl, I thought, in the first instance; but it was not pearl exactly; no, nor white cornelian, which was my second supposition. It was of an oblong shape, milky white, and semi-transparent, in a handsome setting of brilliants. Stericker expressed great satisfaction, if in a rather incoherent way, that the stud had been found. He clearly prized it—if not for its intrinsic worth, which, without doubt, was considerable, however—then, as I judged, for some associations, possibly of a tender kind, connected with it.

He was now so far recovered that he was left solely to my care. The opera was over. I forget whether there was or not a ballet in those days, but I think not; in any case the theatre was emptying fast. He sat for a few minutes longer, and then rose almost briskly, and said—

"I'm glad you were here, old fellow. I don't know what I should have done without you. A strip or two of plaster over the wound, and I shall be able to get on again pretty well, I dare say. Any chemist can manage that for me. And

perhaps a glass of hot brandy-and-water would pull me together as much as anything."

I was glad to find him equal to the proposed proceeding. I had not ventured to hope for so rapid a recovery.

"Not but what it was a nasty shock to a fellow," he said.

I quite agreed that it must have been a very nasty shock—a most unfortunate accident. At this he laughed rather wildly.

"Whatever you call it, don't call it that," he said.

"You mean that it was not an accident?"

It appeared that he did mean that.

"But I saw the glass fall," I said.

"You mean that you saw her throw it down?"

"Saw? Who?" I demanded, unconsciously adopting the interrogatives of Hamlet.

"Arabella!"

I thought him wandering in his mind. I knew nothing of Arabella. I could not remember that I had ever encountered, out of works of fiction, any woman of that name. And then I came to ask myself what, after all, did I really know of Stericker himself? In truth, it was very little.

"It was Arabella's doing, of course," he continued. "I know that very well. I know the opera glass, for the matter of that. I ought to. I gave it her."

Where I had first met Stericker I am by no means clear. I am almost certain that I was never formally introduced to him. But I had seen him at various places upon numberless occasions, until I seemed to have acquired quite a habit of seeing him. So at last—the thing was becoming quite absurd—there was no help for it but to recognise him as an acquaintance, at any rate. Finding each other so frequently face to face in the same place, beneath the same roof, and even at the same table, what could we do, eventually, but laugh and nod, and say, "What! you here?" And then we shook hands.

Still I protest that I knew little of him beyond what he told me. But then what does one really know of any man beyond what he tells one of himself? And certainly that is not always to be relied on. I did not, I may add, like Stericker; still less did I respect him; although I had perhaps no special reason for not respecting him, beyond mere prejudice of a fanciful, and possibly of an unwarrantable, kind. He was by no means, however, the



man I should have selected for a friend, or even for an acquaintance, had choice been permitted me in the matter. But it wasn't. I was doomed to meet Stericker incessantly, and so it chanced that we came to be almost on terms of intimacy with each other. At least he came to be on terms of intimacy with me. And he called me "old fellow." I did not approve of this; indeed I thought it a liberty; but what could I do? I was not really old: at any rate not so very old. But no doubt I had arrived at that period of life when the question of age in its relation to oneself is rather to be avoided than discussed, lest there should arise personal application which could hardly be otherwise than inconvenient.

And now had occurred this accident at the opera house, confirming as it were my acquaintance with Stericker, and converting it almost into a friendship. He expressed great gratitude for the assistance I had rendered him, although, in truth, it had been little enough. But again and again he thanked me, and presently, his wounded head having been skilfully dealt with and relieved by the application of strips of plaster, I found myself at his lodgings in Half-Moon-street, sitting in an easy chair smoking a cigar, and drinking a temperate mixture of brandy-and-water. Until then I had never really known where Stericker lived.

"And so you saw her throw down the opera glass?" he said, returning to the subject of the accident. I corrected him. I had seen no such thing. But he did not pay much attention to what I said.

"And how did she look? Handsome, of course. She was always that; though she certainly is not now nearly so young as when I first met her—and loved her. For what could I do then but love her? Have you ever been in love, old fellow?" he demanded abruptly.

I said, I thought I had. For I felt at the moment that it was not a thing a man could be quite certain about, and I rather objected to the question; and on that account preferred to give a somewhat evasive answer. I did not wish painful memories to be awakened; they had been asleep and very still for a good many years.

"If you doubt about it, why then you never have," said Stericker, oracularly. "There can be no mistake about an attack of love any more than about a fit of the gout. I have suffered from both afflic-

tions. In my time I have loved a good deal, and I have, in return, been loved very much indeed. I say it without vanity."

But he said it with vanity, and it was to that I objected. He outstretched his right arm, bringing an expanse of wrist-band into view, and raised his hand to his head as though about to pass his fingers through his hair and crest it up, after the invariable manner of the self-satisfied and vain-glorious. For the moment he had forgotten how bald he was! He had forgotten, too, the strips of plaster that cross-barred his crown! In discovering anew these infirmities he evidently experienced considerable mortification.

I had heard Stericker described as handsome, but that had never been my opinion of him. No, he was never, he never could have been handsome. He was always well dressed, although inclined to make an excessive, and, therefore, a rather vulgar display of the jewellery he possessed. His teeth, it is true, were superb; but I was never quite convinced that they were the natural products of his own gums—and his nose was of that large fleshy Roman form which has always obtained, to my thinking, an extravagant measure of admiration from the world in general. (My own nose, I may mention, is altogether of smaller dimensions, and of a totally different pattern.) Then he was very upright, carrying before him his protruding waistcoat with considerable dignity. Moreover, there was something imposing about his aspect and manner, arising, I think, from his imperturbable and deeply-rooted self-confidence, and his fixed resolution to exact from others, or enforce upon them if he possibly could, his own estimate of himself. Still there was something decidedly sinister about the expression of Stericker's face: and especially when he smiled. It was a singularly wicked smile, that wrinkled his nose curiously, produced strange dints and a dark flush upon his forehead, and brought down the inner corners of his eyebrows close to his eyes, after a decidedly ominous fashion.

"I have loved and been loved," he repeated, "and I don't mind owning, I have in my time jilted and been jilted." He said this with a sort of morbid Don Giovanni air, that I thought particularly objectionable. "Arabella jilted me," he resumed, "and has never forgiven herself for it, nor me either. How fair she was in those days! She's fair still, for that matter, though she uses more pearl-

powder now than she did. Fair but false. Women are often that, you know. Shall I say always?"

I deprecated such an assertion. According to my experience it was far too sweeping. He conceded that I was right, possibly. Yet, it seemed to me, that he despised me for my moderation.

"You remarked this stud?" He produced the stud we had searched for at his request, and found in the lobby of the opera house. "It would have pained me very much if I had lost it. I regard it as a precious relic. It belonged to Arabella, once. In fact—why should I disguise the truth from you?—that stud is formed out of one of Arabella's front teeth!"

His smile as he said this was not pleasant to contemplate. His confession had certainly startled me. There was something dreadful about it, and he had the air of an Indian brave exhibiting a scalp. He gloried in the possession of Arabella's front tooth! How had he obtained it? I ventured to demand. Was it a pledge of affection? Could they possibly have exchanged teeth as ordinary lovers exchange locks of hair? I hardly knew what I was saying, or of what I was thinking.

"I was a dentist in those days," he said. What he had been before that, and since; what profession he followed at the moment of his addressing me; I really had no idea. "And Arabella was one of my patients. But she was no ordinary patient. She was something more, much more than that. She was for a while my affianced bride. I loved her, and she loved me—at least, we thought that we loved each other."

"And you didn't?"

"Well, we didn't, as it happened, love each other quite so much as we thought we did. In fact, both were disappointed, and, perhaps, a trifle deceived. She thought I had money; I hadn't. I had been told that she was an heiress. Well; she was nothing of the kind. Still, I am a man of integrity, though you may not think it. I had promised marriage; I fully purposed to be as good as my word. The idea of terminating our engagement did not come from me. But Arabella's temper was imperfect; she was far from patient; she was ambitious, and I must add, avaricious and deceitful. She trifled with me. She still held me enchained, but she encouraged the addresses of another and a wealthier suitor. She designed to employ me merely as a means of irritating his

jealousy, and of stimulating him to declare himself. Then I was to be flung aside as something worthless, because it had served her purpose, and was done with. In good time I discovered her treachery. I had intercepted her letters—no matter how—and I knew all. But of that she entertained no sort of suspicion. She had always fond smiles for me, and false words and artificial caresses. It was maddening. Well; she was, as I have said, my patient; and she suffered much from toothache. She came to me in order that I might extract a tooth that pained her. It was arranged that the operation should be performed under the influence of chloroform." He paused.

"But surely, you didn't——"

"Hear me out," he said, and he smiled, I thought, horribly. "It was accident, of course, pure accident. I was dreadfully nervous. Was that surprising? I loved her, and she was amazingly beautiful. It was accident, as I have said, or call it, if you will, an error of judgment, but nothing worse than that as you value my friendship." (As a matter of fact I did not value his friendship in the slightest degree; but I did not say so.) "My conduct, I do assure you, was strictly professional. I did not even kiss her. But I extracted the wrong tooth!"

"That was your vengeance!" I interjected.

"No. She said so; but it wasn't true. I extracted, as I believed, the tooth she had pointed out, desiring me to extract it. Was it my fault that it was a perfectly sound tooth, and a front one too? She said it was; but women, you know, are not reasonable in such cases. I was a dentist then, with a reputation to lose; I was a lover then, although a deceived one. However there was no pacifying Arabella. She was persuaded that I had done it on purpose. She was most violent. She had pre-determined upon a quarrel with me, although she had not perhaps fixed upon the precise period for its occurrence. Well, she brought it on then. It was an awful scene. How she abused me! What language she permitted herself! How she screamed! What hysterics she went into! However, the tooth was out, there was no mistake about that."

Here he smiled again, most malevolently, as it seemed to me.

"Her treachery towards me was punished, although, as I have stated, by pure accident

or error of judgment, which you please. But Arabella vowed vengeance against me. In that respect, I am bound to say, she has been as good as her word. It's no thanks to her that I am living to speak of these things to-night."

"Then you really believe that she let fall the opera-glass on purpose!"

"I am quite satisfied of it. She meant my death. She knew I was there. I had noticed her before leaning out of her box, and taking note of my position. I was just thinking of changing it, suspecting what might happen, when I was struck down. Arabella is a woman who knows what she is about. She was always that kind of woman. I know her. I've good reason to. And it's not the first time she's planned to punish me as savagely as she could. You did not know until to-night perhaps that one of my eyes was artificial? No! naturally you didn't. Well, *that* was her doing."

"What! The artificial eye!"

"Don't be stupid," he said rudely. No doubt I had been rather obtuse; but I had heard of ladies painting on glass and doing potichomanie and other strange things in the way of fancy-work, and for the moment, altogether, my mind was in rather a confused state.

"No," Stericker continued, "but I owe to her the necessity for wearing an artificial eye. It happened at the flower show in the Botanical Gardens. There was a dense crowd. It was in the tent where the pelargoniums are exhibited. Not that I care about such things, but it so happened. A lady advanced with her parasol held in front of her. Suddenly she seemed to thrust it at me, as a lancer might his lance. Her aim was wonderfully true. The sight of my left eye was gone for ever. It was quite a mercy that the spike of her parasol did not penetrate to my brain. That was Arabella's doing, of course. Part of her revenge."

"And she said nothing?"

"She said calmly, 'I beg your pardon. It was an accident,' and passed on. She looked very handsome. She was superbly dressed. However, that she always is. Her husband is old, but amazingly rich. He labours to gratify her slightest whim—so I'm told. But her only desire—the sole passion of her life—is to wreak her vengeance upon me. I feel that. She cannot forget, much less forgive, the loss of her front tooth. You see, she's reminded of that unhappy business every

time she looks in the glass, which she does frequently, of course. She was always vain. And she means, sooner or later, to be the death of me, that's quite clear. She's made two very good attempts: at the Botanical Gardens and, to-night, at the Opera. The third time perhaps she'll succeed."

"But doesn't the thought horrify you?"

"I accept my destiny," Stericker said, smiling, and with rather an affected air. "It would be something to fall by the hand of such a woman as that; that would be my consolation; really a fine creature you know, although no longer in the bloom of youth; indeed, removed some distance now from the bloom of youth, but still grand and beautiful, and so resolute! If she had loved me as she hates me!"

"You love her still then?"

"Well; not precisely. But I admire her, just as I admire the Bengal Tigress in the Zoo. If possible, I should like Arabella to be caged like the tigress; but as that can't be—well, I wear this stud as a memento of her, and for the rest I take my chance. Now, what will *you* take? Another cigar? No? Some more brandy-and-water?"

No. I would take nothing more. I had, in point of fact, already taken more than was absolutely necessary to me. I left Stericker. I was much impressed by my experiences of that night, by what had happened at the Opera, and his extraordinary narrative touching the vengeance of Arabella. Was it true? I was really not in a state of mind to determine. Even now I have a difficulty at arriving at any distinct conclusion on the subject. But I know that Stericker's face wore, to my thinking, a very remarkable expression as I quitted him. His smile was simply awful. And strange to say—at least, I think so, though it may not strike others in that light—I never saw Stericker again. He died shortly afterwards, as I read in the newspapers, the victim of a street accident. He was knocked down and run over in Hyde Park, by a pony phaeton, driven by a lady. There was, of course, an inquest upon his remains, the jury deciding, however, that he met his death "by misadventure." Some attempt had been made to hold the lady responsible, and to charge her with furious driving. But nothing of the kind was sustained before the coroner. Various witnesses gave evidence, acquitting her of all blame in the matter. Her conduct in court was said to be most

becoming. And it was reported that, attired in very deep morning, she had followed Stericker's body to its last resting-place in Brompton Cemetery. Now, was this lady the Arabella of Stericker's story? She may have been. But I have no certain evidence of the fact. Nor, indeed, have I anything further to communicate touching the life and death of my acquaintance Stericker.

### CHINESE PROVERBS.

THE excellence of aphorisms has been said to consist chiefly in the comprehension of some obvious and useful truth in a few words; and if this be the case, the Chinese language is peculiarly adapted for the production of proverbs, for it possesses, from its peculiar structure, a beauty and pointedness of expression, which, however, no degree of care or pains can adequately convey into a translation.

Let us cite from various sources a few of the numerous aphorisms, maxims, and proverbs current among the Chinese, many of which will suggest parallel sentiments in our own and other languages.

By a long journey we know a horse's strength; so length of days shows a man's heart.

In the days of affluence always think of poverty; do not let want come upon you and make you remember with regret the time of plenty. In contra-distinction to this sentiment is another: Let us get drunk to-day, while we have wine; the sorrows of to-morrow may be borne to-morrow.

To correct an evil which already exists, is not so well as to foresee and prevent it.

Wine and good dinners make abundance of friends, but in the time of adversity not one is to be found.

Cautious conduct under circumstances of suspicion is inculcated somewhat oddly by the following: In a field of melons do not pull up your shoe; under a plum-tree do not adjust your cap.

"Tempus fugit" becomes in Chinese, "Time flies like an arrow; days and months like a weaver's shuttle."

Do not anxiously expect what is not yet come; do not vainly regret what is already past.

The Chinese evidently agree with Solomon's well-known advice to a parent, for they say: "If you love your son, be liberal in punishment; if you hate your son, accustom him to dainties."

If you would understand the character of the prince, examine his ministers; if you would understand the disposition of any man, look at his companions; if you would know that of a father, observe his son.

Man is born without knowledge, and when he has obtained it, very soon becomes old; when his experience is ripe, death suddenly seizes him.

The fame of men's good actions seldom goes beyond their own doors; but their evil deeds are carried to the distance of a thousand miles.

Though powerful medicines are nauseous to the taste, they are good for the disease; though candid advice is unpleasant to the ear, it is profitable for the conduct.

From the following simile, looking-glasses are evidently appreciated by Chinese ladies: Without a clear mirror, a woman cannot know the state of her own face; without a true friend, a man cannot discern the errors of his own actions.

The evidence of others is not comparable to personal experience; nor is "I heard" as good as "I saw."

The three great misfortunes in life are:—In youth to bury one's father, in middle-age to lose one's wife, and being old to have no son.

A virtuous woman is a source of honour to her husband; a vicious one causes him disgrace.

The strong feeling existing among the Chinese against a widow's marrying a second husband is clearly seen in the following:—It being asked, "Supposing a widowed woman to be very poor and destitute, might she in such a case take a second husband?" It was answered, "This question arises merely from the fear of cold and hunger; but to be starved to death is a very small matter, compared with the loss of her respectability!" The Chinese, be it observed, are great sticklers for propriety and respectability, and are very much afraid of what they term "losing face."

He who at once knows himself and knows others, will triumph as often as he contends.

It is too late to pull the rein when the horse has gained the brink of the precipice; the time for stopping the leak is past, when the vessel is in the midst of the river.

It is easy to convince a wise man, but to reason with a fool is a difficult undertaking.

To meet with an old friend in a distant country may be compared to the delightfulness of rain after a long drought.



To the contented, even poverty and obscurity bring happiness; while to the ambitious, wealth and honours themselves are productive of misery.

The truth of the following sentiment is, we all know, not confined to China: Though a poor man should live in the midst of a noisy market, no one will ask about him; though a rich man should bury himself among the mountains, his relations will come to him from afar.

A single hair of silk does not make a thread; one tree does not make a grove.

A single conversation across the table with a wise man is better than ten years mere study of books.

If a man has plenty of money but no child, he cannot be reckoned rich; if a man has children but no money, he cannot be considered poor.

If a man does good, Heaven will bestow on him a hundred blessings.

Great goodness and great wickedness, sooner or later, are sure to be rewarded.

Of a hundred virtues, filial piety is the first.

True gold fears not the fire.

Inconstancy is expressed by the adage: Tsao san, mu sze, i.e. "in the morning three, at night four."

The French "Donner un œuf pour un bœuf," in Chinese is "to give a sheep for an ox."

"To look for a needle in a bundle of hay" is with us expressive of trying to do an impossibility; the Chinese say "To feel for a needle at the bottom of the ocean" and "To turn a somersault in an oyster shell."

"To be bold enough to strike the tiger's beard" expresses great courage and daring.

An ox with a ring in his nose, i.e. a man who has his passions under proper control.

Where there is musk, there will, of course be perfume; it will not be necessary to stand in the wind (i.e. talent and real worth will make themselves manifest without the aid of trickery).

"A basket of grain producing only a pound of chicken meat" is symbolical of a losing business.

"A toad in a well cannot behold the whole Heavens" is used in reference to contracted ideas.

"Climbing a tree to hunt for fish" expresses looking for things where they cannot possibly be found.

To covet another man's house and lose one's own ox (i.e. to lose what property

one already has in the effort to acquire more).

"To grind down an iron pestle to make a needle" is a Chinese way of expressing indomitable perseverance.

When you converse in the road, remember that there are men in the grass.

The neighbouring walls have ears.

Correct yourself, then correct others.

Among\* the sayings on the border-land of apophthegms and proverbs are such sentences as "Within the four seas all are brethren;" and Tien wu êrh jih, min wu êrh huang (Heaven has not two suns, the people have not two Emperors); both of which are very effective proverbs, if adroitly used, the former against the exclusiveness of Chinese politicians and their dislike of foreigners, and the latter against polytheism.

The following proverb is applied as an answer to those who foolishly murmur against the daily appointments of nature and the changes of the seasons:—

No day, no night,  
No harvest bright;  
No cold, no heat,  
No rice to eat.

There is one proverb which requires a distinct and separate notice. It is as follows:—

You're old and ought to die by right;  
You eat our rice from morn till night.

We give Mr. Moule's explanation of this in extenso:—"Considering the fact that the Chinese are remarkable for filial duty, the proverb would, at first sight, seem to present an instance of the extremely rare phenomenon of a national saying springing from the immoral and not from the moral side of a people's thoughts. There is always, however, a strong presumption against such an origin for any maxim that has fairly passed into popular use; and it is a suggestion worth making that this proverb in particular may be an instance of the ironical humour of the Chinese, rather than of heartlessness. It appears not improbable that it took its rise in the grim realities of some period of famine; it would then be perpetuated in an ironical sense, and would be used humorously with what has well been called the irony of affection, even by the most filial and dutiful lips. At the same time, as it is always liable to the charge of a literal interpretation, it is not surprising that many

\* For much of the substance of the remainder of this article we are indebted to Mr. Moule's Chapters on China and the Chinese; the metrical renderings are by that gentleman's brother.

Chinese will often express strong dissent from this proverb and dissatisfaction at its place among their popular sayings."

There is another proverb of a similar nature, and capable, perhaps, of a like explanation, which does not, at first sight, seem to speak well for the courage and conjugal affection of the Chinese:—

Man and wife  
In tranquil life  
Sit like birds upon one bough;  
Trouble comes,  
They shake their plumes,  
"Saave qui pent," their language now.  
One flies west,  
As he thinks best;  
One flies east,  
Where trouble's least.

The Chinese have one proverb, which, at any rate, breathes the spirit of true magnanimity. A man being asked to let bygones be bygones, and at least to receive another with whom he had a quarrel, replied:—"Of course I will, 'The knife is sharpened, but not to slay the man who comes alone and of his own accord.'"

Archbishop Trench has pointed out that many proverbs are common to all languages, dressed and coloured according to the varying climes and customs. One common proverb, for example, which speaks of falling between two stools, in China where boat-travelling is the one mode of locomotion for so many millions of her people, takes this form:—

One foot in this boat, one foot in that,  
They both push off and you fall flat

"To-morrow never comes" is in Chinese "Every day has its to-morrow."

The country saying that snow-drifts under hedges are waiting for more snow to join them is not unknown to the peasantry of the Flowery Land, for they say, Hsüeh têng hsüeh, i.e. snow waits for snow.

Our well-known meteorological doggerel:

If it rains before seven,  
'Twill be fine before eleven,

reappears in Chinese thus:—

If it rains when you open your door,  
'Twill shine when your breakfast is o'er.

The Chinese carry their liking for proverbs, and sayings akin to proverbs, to such an extent that the most common ornaments for the walls of their houses and temples are long strips of paper, hung perpendicularly in pairs and inscribed in bold characters with sentences which are alike in meaning and construction. They have a book called Ming-hsin pao chien (i.e. the reminding precious mirror), which is filled with quotations of this nature

from the works of various writers. In conclusion, we quote from Davis' Chinese a paragraph illustrative of a Chinese peculiarity, which is in some measure connected with our subject:—"Some of the ordinary expressions of the Chinese are pointed and sarcastic enough. A blustering harmless fellow they call 'a paper tiger.' When a man values himself over much, they compare him to 'a rat falling into a scale and weighing itself.' Over-doing a thing they call 'a hunchback making a bow.' A spendthrift they compare to 'a rocket,' which goes off at once. Those who expend their charity on remote objects, but neglect their family, are said 'to hang a lantern on a pole,' which is seen afar, but gives no light below."

## SAFELY MARRIED.

BY THE AUTHOR OF "AN EXPERIENCE," "DAISY'S TRIALS," &c., &c.

### CHAPTER XXIII.

WHAT a hill we had to climb! It was getting late in the afternoon when we, at last, reached Glaismoor Manse—a small, plain, grey building, perched so high and in so exposed a spot, that it was useless to try to get trees, or shrubs, or flowers—except of the very hardiest—to grow about it. As we stopped at the little gate in the hedge of clipped holly, we could see, on a rustic bench under a group of wind-warped firs near the porch, a young woman, who had apparently been reading to some sturdy-limbed, red-cheeked, rough-headed children, till our approach had drawn off their attention.

By the time I had been extricated by Hannah from my vehicle, the young woman had risen from among the children, had freed herself from their clinging hands, and was coming down the grey-shingled path towards me.

It was Angela. Angela with, it seemed to me, a look both of apprehension and of confusion on her face. What a face it was! Its delicate refinement could not have been better set off than by those honest, hardy, peasant-born looking children who were again hanging about her.

"Thank Heaven!" I could not help crying, as I caught and squeezed her hand. "My dear, it does me more good than you can guess, no end of good, to see you."

The poor girl flushed hotly, then paled, asking,

"What has happened?"

"Nothing has happened, and it is for that I thank Heaven."

"There is news, then, and good news of——" But she paused, again flushing overpoweringly.

"There has been no news," I told her, at which all the crimson faded.

She must be very weak, I thought, to flush and pale in this rapid manner; and, now I fixed my eyes upon her more observantly, I saw that she had grown very thin and worn-looking.

"My dear," I said, "I'm very tired; I know Mr. Brinkburn will gladly let you give us a cup of tea—me and Hannah; but, first, where can I speak to you, quietly and alone, for five minutes?"

She took me to her own room; and Hannah, who, in her girlhood, had known the manse quite well, and who now had an old friend in its kitchen, made her way round to that familiar region.

Angela's room was so poorly furnished as to look to me, after the luxury of Braithwait, almost unfurnished, but the neatness and the taste of its occupant had given to it a certain charm, and its window had the most magnificent view, I think, without exception, that I have ever seen, over hill and dale, and moor and fell, to the distant sea, then flashing blue-grey in the afternoon sunshine.

"You are not thinking to stay here through the winter?" I asked. "It will be fearfully bleak through the winter, and you are, I am sorry to see, looking delicate."

"Oh, no," she answered, drearily, "it is only while the children are here, Mr. Brinkburn's grand-children, that I can be of any use. I must look for another home soon."

She was trying to make me a comfortable seat, by putting the pillow from her little narrow white bed in an old arm-chair by the window, and finding me a foot-stool.

When she had done this she came and knelt by my side, and said,

"The good God has sent you to me to-day, Miss Hammond. I have been feeling that I must do something, speak to somebody, or I should die; each day this feeling has grown stronger. May I speak to you as I might have spoken to my mother? I am motherless, you know, and fatherless, homeless, too, and I do, indeed, want a friend! I know you are so kind, and so wise. I have not seen you very much, certainly, but I have heard very much about you. Will you be my friend?"

Her over-large, over-bright, and darkly-encircled eyes were fixed upon me imploringly.

"My dear, yes, and glad to do anything in my poor power to help you." She would have kissed my old hand, but I bent down and kissed her forehead.

"But first," she began, "before I tell you what I must tell you, what I want to tell you, tell me, do you mean there has not been any news of Mr. Braithwait? Not any since he left?" Evidently she could not name, could hardly think of, Allan, without the rushing of her heart's best blood into her poor thin face.

"Not any," I answered, "if you have had none. Neither I, nor his wife, nor his London lawyers have had any direct or indirect news of him since he left London. And you have had none?"

"None, though he said I should very soon hear from him! What does this mean? What do you think this means?" she asked with blanched face, haggard eyes, and parted lips awaiting my answer.

"God alone knows."

She drooped, laid her cheek on my knees, and was some time still.

I don't now remember which of us broke that silence, but, by-and-by, I gradually learnt from Angela the story of what had passed between her and Allan at that last meeting. It cost the poor child much to tell it, much in burning blushes and in hot tears, but she told it bravely.

"I had always loved him, Miss Hammond," she said, "I had so loved him! Indeed, how was I to help it? But when he came to me that day, to say good-bye, looking oh! so ill, oh! so wretched! when he let me see something of what he had been suffering, something of what it was from which he was flying, something of the dreariness of the life that lay before him; then, all in a moment, my heart sprang out of me to him, before I understood what anything meant, indeed, for that moment I was mad, I was just one blaze of passion; I knew nothing, I thought nothing, I only felt that I longed and longed, with longing that seemed as if it must kill me, to pour out my very life at his feet to do him any slightest service. And at his feet I threw myself, seizing his hand, begging him to take me with him, me, who loved him so that I cared for nothing, if only I could make him one bit less unhappy. May I touch you any longer? Can you bear me near you any more?" she asked in the pause, to which breathlessness compelled

her, drawing a little away from me as she spoke.

"Child, it was sin," I told her; "what you said and did was sin. Sin," I then felt constrained to add, "such as in my youth, had I been as ignorantly innocent and so tried, I should"—I almost think I said "I hope I should"—"myself have sinned."

"Then it need not put me past all chance of ever again feeling good and pure?"

"No, no, no. Go on, go on. And Allan?"

"Almost before I had finished speaking," Angela went on, "I was burnt up with shame of what I had done, what I had said. I put my face down on his feet, and felt I could never meet his eyes again. It seemed to me that for a long time nothing happened; he did not speak, then——" She came to a sobbing pause.

And I, Mary Adelaide Hammond, thought I knew something of the nature of such wrestlings with the temptations of the Evil One, as must have filled up the measure of Allan Braithwait's silence.

"Then?" I questioned aloud.

"Then I felt his hand on my head, and I heard his voice saying, 'Poor child, she knows not what she does.' And then he added, 'God bless and reward you for your self-sacrificing love, my Angela, my dear sister Angela; but I am not, thank God, wretch enough to accept your sacrifice.' When he had said that I felt his arms round me, lifting me up; but I kept my hands over my face, I could not look at him. He stayed with me some time after that, talking to me quietly, trying, I knew, to talk me quiet. His voice had a caressing tenderness in it, such as he might have used to a sick little sister, and yet it had reverence. He promised to let me hear from him soon, and to send me an address to which his sister Angela might write to him. I have not felt as frightened as I might at not having heard, though grieved beyond what I can say, because I have thought that perhaps he did write, and that Mrs. Esherbee, saying to herself it was true kindness and for my good, had destroyed his letter. He told me how happy it would make him at any time to hear of my happiness. He told me of some provision which was to be made for me in case he should never return. He told me he should never forget, should always love his sister Angela, should always remember her as the truest, and sweetest, and purest, and noblest, and most unselfish woman he had known, but

that he never looked to see my face again, or not for long, long years, not till we should both be old. He said that, you see, Miss Hammond, to shut me out from all vain hope, to hinder me from wasting my heart and my life in vague and sinful longing."

Here the poor young thing, her head upon my knees, wept bitterly and long. And I, stroking gently her soft dark hair, somewhat lost myself in the perplexed tangles of my own mind, because, I suppose, of the weak-brainedness of old age, as I speculated on the perversities of fate or the mysteriousnesses of Providence, which had ordained that Allan, though knowing Angela—a woman, as I thought, with whom he might have led a life of a noble ideal sort of happiness—could yet have been bewitched by Elsie. In my feeble old woman's way, ruminating such matters of life and death, and love and sorrow, I had forgotten where I was, and whose the head upon my knee, till it was lifted up, and eyes wide, almost wild with yearning were fixed on mine, as she said despairingly,

"And there has been no news of him! no news! What can, what can that mean?"

"God only knows, my dear, and only time will tell."

"Perhaps," she answered, in an awe-struck whisper, "not even time, but only eternity!"

"We can but wait. Meanwhile, my dear, there is something that you can do for him. His wife keeps saying that she wants you."

Something of hatred, something of disgust, also something of fear, passed over the girl's face then, or so I fancied. Both her voice and her expression were wonderfully hard as she asked,

"Why should she want me? For what can she want me? What does she know of me?" Then she added, "Oh, if you knew how hard I have to try to keep from hating her, who has ruined and made miserable the life it should have been her glory to honour and to make happy!"

I told Angela then a little of the great change in Elsie, and of her great suffering; of how it sometimes seemed to me as if, at the cost of her life, she were coming into possession of her soul.

"But why should she want me?" asked Angela.

"It is not so easy to find a why for the fancies of a sick brain in a sick body," I answered. "What she says is, that she wants to learn of you to be good."



"Of me! learn of me to be good!" cried Angela, with a startled, shamed sort of look. "I teach her! teach anyone to be good! Oh, Miss Hammond!"

"I think, Angela, you are very happy in having a way opened before you in which you can serve your brother-friend, by helping his wife!"

The girl rose from her knees now; she went to the window, and stood long, where I could not see her face, gazing out, probably seeing nothing.

When she turned and looked at me, I thought that face both glorified and awe-stricken.

"Shall I go back with you?" she asked. "Did you come to fetch me?"

"No, my dear, I will not take you back with me; but hold yourself in readiness to come when I send for you, and that will be soon. Indeed, I want you, Angela. I need some one to take care of me, as well as to help me to take care of poor, miserable, suffering, little Elsie."

"When you send for me I will come." She spoke with grave nobility.

"And Heaven will reward you," I told her.

Turning, after some silent moments, to lighter things, she said,

"I shall be glad to leave here as soon as Mr. Brinkburn's daughter fetches home her children; that will be almost directly. They were sent here while their father was ill, and he is almost well again now."

"Is not Mr. Brinkburn kind to you?" I asked in surprise.

"Only too kind. He cannot get it out of his head that I am a fine lady, for whom the rough ways of his house are unfit. And I am afraid that he puts himself to unusual expenses on my account, which he will not let me in any way repay him. It is things said by the children that have made me fancy this."

"It won't be difficult to set that right, my dear."

Presently, Angela, having left me a few moments, to see that all was ready for me, down-stairs, took me to the manse parlour and its homely tea-table, where Mr. Brinkburn himself and all the children waited for us.

Mr. Brinkburn is, as far as appearance goes, of the roughest type of rough Yorkshire country parson. A huge man, with great square red face, immense clumsily-shod square-toed feet, shabby and uncouth to slovenliness in his whole dress and aspect. But there is the leaven of spiritual grace in his graceless ungainly mass of

matter, as I felt when I heard the reverent earnestness with which he asked a blessing on our meal: there is also tenderness and gentleness, as anyone would know who watched his ways with Angela, and with his grandchildren. To me his hospitality was of the heartiest, and yet it was diffident.

After tea, I was overcome by such excessive lassitude, that I was glad enough to accept the invitation pressed upon me to stay the night.

Angela gave her room up to me, stowing herself somewhere among the children, or spending the night, as I suspect, in the sitting-room. Hannah was accommodated with her old friend the manse servant.

Our Noah's Ark vehicle remained at the gate with upturned shafts—the man and horse having gone down to the inn.

What a never-to-be-forgotten sight I beheld from Angela's room at sun-rise next morning! I had wakened very early and had drawn up the blind, and opened the window. Returning to bed, I sat up, and watched the most magnificent pageant. I seemed to be above the world, to look down upon the kingdom of dawn; sea, earth, and sky, all unrolling their splendours before me.

I could not sleep any more, and when the sun was fairly up, and there was no longer any special atmospheric wonder to behold, I got my spectacles, which happily I had yesterday morning put in my pocket, and Angela's well-worn and much marked bible.

By-and-by, before even Hannah was up, Angela came to me, bringing me the cup of tea she had herself lighted the kitchen fire to make for me, anxious to learn how I had fared through the night, on her hard bed, and in her unluxurious chamber.

I had had a good many hours of sound sleep, for I had gone to bed very early; nevertheless, I could not but own that I was still very tired.

"Ah, child," I said to Angela, as I kissed her sweet pale solicitous face, "you can't fancy how it will add to an old woman's happiness, to have you about her. I seem to crave to be cared for now, Angela."

#### CHAPTER XXIV.

I LEFT Glaismoor Manse quite early. What vivid life was in the summer morning air at that height! It greatly helped me, I am sure, to endure the fatigues of my journey. I got back to Braithwait early in the afternoon.

I thought Elsie would have been keeping

anxious watch for me; seeing nothing of her as I approached the house I feared she was still suffering too much to move. But Markham told me she was up and in her dressing-room. The pain had passed, but had left her as weak as a baby and as frail as a butterfly, nevertheless she had insisted on being allowed to remain alone.

As soon as, with Hannah's help, I had made some change in my dress, I went to look for Elsie in her dressing-room. When I did not find her there, nor in her bed-room, nor in her pretty boudoir, an indefinable apprehension came over me, but I sought for her quietly, by myself, till I found her.

It was in Allan's dressing-room I found her, kneeling against the wall, her face hidden in a coat of Allan's that had been left hanging there, while, as I presently found out, in her hand she held one of his gloves pressed against her.

As I stood hesitating whether to make a noiseless retreat or to speak to her, I unexpectedly sneezed. Of course she heard and turned and saw me. She got up from her knees immediately. A colour flew over her face that was just one of the rose-flame tints I had seen in the sun-rise sky that morning. Her eyes looked at me strangely, changeably, defiantly, and then appealingly. She kept the glove in her hand, still pressing it against her.

She seemed to me to waver as she stood, and she turned deadly white.

I went to her then and put my arms round her, and she let herself lean upon my bosom, and she cried sobbingly,

"When will he come back? When will he come back? I would be so good if he would come back, so good. When will he come back? When will he come back? I do love him. I do! I do! Write to him and tell him to come back. Tell him I love him. Tell him I will be so good, if only he will come back."

"Where can I write to him, Elsie? how can I know where to find him with a letter? Heaven only knows where he is. We can only pray for him, Elsie."

It was with no remnant of my former cruelty towards her that I said this; that had melted out of me long ago; but it was with a wish in some sort to prepare her mind for a future in which Allan would never come back.

She pressed her face against me with a little cry, then she whispered,

"I can't pray. I have tried. I don't know how. Pray for me. I can't find what to say. I don't know how to get God to hear me."

I locked the door, and then we knelt side by side. Elsie, still pressing that glove against her, repeated after me the few simple sentences I said. Few and simple as they seemed to me, the strain upon Elsie of repeating them appeared, judging by the look of her poor face, to be intense. And no sooner had I finished than all her pain came back to her with interest.

It was always so for some time to come: every approach to mental and spiritual effort would be followed by attacks of acute physical anguish.

If that night I had known where to reach Allan by a letter, I should have written him a letter of recal, telling him to come quickly back if he wished to see his wife again alive, for that she was dying, and not slowly.

I am glad that I was not able to do that. The time was not come. I delayed to summon Angela till Elsie should speak of her again. I dreaded any excitement for Elsie, as likely to make what was left of life in her burn out the faster. But I had got Angela close at hand, having asked her, as soon as the grandchildren had left the manse, to come and keep house for me at my cottage, that it might at any time be ready to receive me and Elsie if, no news from Allan reaching us, we should decide to move there.

Braithwait grew week by week a more sad, sick, solitary, shut-up place, in spite of its wealth of sunshine and of flowers. I longed for my own familiar cottage with a sort of fatuous feeling that the troubles to be borne might seem smaller in the smaller place. Often in the long days, when nothing could be done for Elsie, I drove to my old home, and spent some hours with Angela, and we talked of Allan.

I began to believe that this unbroken silence of his meant one of two very opposite things. Either he had given up the idea of any very lengthy absence, and the time before he came home would not be long—or he would never more come home at all, being dead.

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